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PRESS RELEASE

CropLife International launches new Reference Guide for biotech

CropLife International today launched its new 'Reference Guide for Biosafety Frameworks Addressing the Release of Plant Living Modified Organisms (LMOs)' into the environment.

The Reference Guide is intended to help governments around the world develop national science-based risk assessment and risk management measures for the intentional release of plants that have been improved using modern biotechnology.

Many governments throughout the world are in the process of adopting or updating their legal regimes governing the development and commercialisation of bio-enhanced crops. The plant science industry feels it can help governments with the adoption of transparent, science-based legal regimes for agricultural uses of modern biotechnology.

"Governments need to consider how to allow the benefits of biotechnology to be realised while ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of their biological diversity as well as the protection of their public's health," explained Christian Verschueren, Director General of CropLife International. "This reference guide is intended as a tool for government regulators to use in developing their own rules and is available to all."

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The Reference Guide offers a recommended framework for establishing an oversight regime for Plant Living Modified Organisms (LMOs). The document focuses on approaches to identifying potential risks and, where necessary, assessing and managing potential impacts on the environment. Following each provision, the guide provides a discussion of the text's rationale and, where appropriate, references to existing national measures, international agreements or guidance. These include the International Guidelines for Safety in Biotechnology developed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), guidance developed by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Cartegena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

An overall aim of the Reference Guide is to attempt to promote the international harmonisation of objective, science-based national biosafety frameworks.

The key components of the Reference Guide include:

- Authorisation procedures for the intentional release of Plant LMOs into the environment, including application and risk assessment provisions;
- Institutional arrangements and authorities;
- Import and export terms;
- Handling, transport, packaging and identification provisions;
- Provisions for the unintentional release of Plant LMOs; and
- Compliance with national and international reporting obligations

The Reference Guide does not comprehensively address all issues related to biotechnology. The document is limited to the oversight of the intentional introduction of Plant LMOs into the environment. Issues regarding the oversight of food and feed uses are not addressed in the Reference Guide.

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Copies of the Reference Guide can be obtained by contacting CropLife International on +32 2 542 0410

CropLife International is the global federation representing the plant science industry. It supports a network of 75 regional and national associations and their member companies worldwide, led by companies such as BASF, Bayer CropScience, Dow AgroSciences, Dupont, FMC, Monsanto, Sumitomo and Syngenta.

CropLife International promotes the benefits of crop protection and biotechnology products and their importance to sustainable agriculture and food production.

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